

THE FUNCTIONAL DIMENSION OF SCHOOL INSPECTION AND SCHOOL INSPECTORS' STATUS IN ISRAEL

Dalia HALFON HEN, doctorand UST

Rezumat: În articolul **Dimensiunea funcțională a inspecției școlare și statutul inspectorului școlar în Izrael** se face o privire de ansamblu asupra inspecției școlare și inspectorilor școlari din perspectiva impactului lor formativ asupra eficacității profesionale a învățătorilor. Inspectoratele școlare sunt instituții regionale, aflate sub jurisdicția Ministerului Educației, care acționează în vederea realizării prevederilor educaționale stipulate de Legea Învățământului, referitoare la finalitățile învățământului, accesul la toate nivelurile și formele de învățământ, precum și asigurarea condițiilor optime pentru desfășurarea procesului instructiv –educativ. Unitățile de competență specifice inspecției școlare din Izrael sunt: colaborarea cu factorii relevanți; planificarea strategică; evaluarea activității didactice; monitorizarea activității specifice procesului de învățământ; coordonarea activității specifice învățământului.

Cuvinte cheie: inspecție școlară, inspector școlar, Legea învățământului, finalitățile învățământului, eficacitate profesională.

School Inspection is part of the National Educational Management Board. The process of inspection is comprised of a mixture of duties, such as instigation, encouragement of professional growth, teachers' development, informed choice, improvement of educational targets, teaching approaches and methods, and the evaluation thereof; the total of all efforts for the teaching improvement by the educational personnel.

The Israeli Ministry of Education defines the role of an inspector in a statutory status, which means, the status according to the law. An inspector is “one whose duty is to inspect and examine the quality of efficacy of a certain action performed by others” [**Error! eference source not found.**, p. 610]. He is a senior educational employee, whose position description stipulates: to provide the educational institutions with school or kindergarten teachers; to evaluate and improve the teaching quality and the teachers' activity efficacy in a school; to approve employment of new teachers or get them to resign from the system; to collect, synthesize and supply information, to formulate policy at the state level, and distribute the principles of a proper execution. The main role of an inspector is perceived as controlling the school and making sure that the execution of the state instructions is fulfilled in a proper manner [9]. The inspector is not a part of the school team; one of his basic duties is to regularly make professional visits, as opposed to the school principal that deals with the current management of the school and is a member of the team in the educational institution.

The inspector's role is affected by the trends, documents, and processes taking place in the educational system: the Mandatory Education Law, system decentralization, strengthening the status of local authorities, transformation of authorities and budgets to the local authorities and schools directly, educational standards, attempts to standardize educational targets and purposes. All these aspects set complicated challenges that require changes in the role of inspection and in evaluation of the educational system [**Error! eference source not found.**], [10, p. 117].

In Moldova the activity of school inspection is regulated by the Government. The National

Inspectorate currently operates based on Decision no. 898 from 27.10.2014 regarding School Inspectorate [2], . On the basis of art. 14 (5) and (7) and art. 15 of Law No. 98 of May 4, 2012 on specialized central public administration (Official Gazette of the Republic of Moldova, 2012 nr.160-164, art. 537:

1. it was established the structure of School Inspectorate comprising 45 units, ensured from the account of number of staff units limit and personnel expenses approved for the Ministry of Education.
2. it was approved the *Regulation regarding the National School Inspectorate organization and activity*. According the above mentioned regulation, the basic function of School Inspectorate is to ensure the quality of general education by promoting, monitoring and assessing state policy implementation in the field of general education. Thus, the main functions of school inspectorate are:
 - evaluation of general education institutions activity on the basis of standards approved by the Ministry of Education;
 - complex evaluation of general education institutions in order to accredit them;
 - evaluation of general education institutions managing staff on the basis of evaluation methodology approved by the Ministry of Education.

Besides monitoring the educational activity, elaborating and updating accreditation and evaluation standards for general education institutions, managing staff and didactic staff, the regulation comprises a series of attributions referring to the promotion of quality in general education. In this frame, paragraphs 17 and 18 stipulate the promotion of good practices for ensuring quality of general education and the supply of supportive and guiding services for the application of methodology and self-assessment tools [2], [15]. Analyzing the attributions mentioned above, we notice that most of them are concentrated on monitoring, control and evaluation, and less on cooperation between inspectors and didactic staff, situation specific to Israel too.

J. Glanz [4] considers that presently the class inspection is still “a bureaucratic legacy of isolating defects” and presents the characteristics of the field with help of terms such as “snooper-vision”.

Types of inspectors: There are three types of inspectors operating in the Israeli educational system: *General inspectors* - entrusted with the educational institutions, study programs, implementation of processes and pupils' achievements; *professional inspectors* - entrusted with the field of knowledge, designing syllabuses and usually operating as a

national professional inspection; *management staff inspectors* that include division and administration managers, the unit chiefs, and more.

The main duties of a general inspector are:

1. Evaluation and instruction of teachers and principals, supervision and inspection, meaning a practical rendition for application and execution of the key principles directed by the Ministry of Education;
2. Supervision of the execution of the Mandatory Education Law;
3. Supervision of absorption of the teaching personnel and its regulation;
4. Dismissal of the teaching personnel;
5. Authorization of the educational institutions;
6. Authoritative supervision and control [11].

There are two main ways to perform an inspector's job: the hierarchical, traditional approach when an inspector is a specialist who operates from his authoritative status towards teachers; and the modern leader-guide approach that is a cognitive coaching when the inspector and the teacher work together in order to empower the teacher's abilities. In Israel, the leader-guide approach is taken only by some of the inspectors in cooperation with the educational institutions and their principals, by their initiative or their direct inspectors' initiative [9].

Examining the types of inspection, many researchers distinguish between *external inspection* and *collaborative evaluation* and describe the role of an inspector, on one hand, as a critic and evaluator and, on the other hand, as a pedagogical and advisory figure. R. J. Krajewski [7] directs his attention to the fact that teaching inspection is the biggest part of general inspection and that it is a process that ensures pupils' success. The general inspection deals with the aspects of teacher's commitment, while the teaching inspection is directly related to teaching as a process. The researchers distinguish several types of inspector's styles where each one represents cognitive complexity and different approaches. *Inspection styles are based on two orientations – inspection and supervision.* The management of various orientations within the duties of inspectors is a complex subject stemming from cultures and behavior patterns.

The *inspection orientation is authoritative* and limited in its targets; it stresses critical dimensions, such as use of tests and standards in a control aspect; *the supervision orientation is a softer approach* that stresses trust and focuses on the processes of accompanying, guidance, consulting, and feedback that promotes professional development. An inspector of supervision style assists studying the supervised subject for the inspection type inspector, whereas the status of inspection orientation strengthens the status of the consultant (supervision). There is an offer to divide the inspector's duties so that he would deal with only a part of inspection, while the consulting part would be performed by private companies and academy people as vouchers [3], [13].

Inspection approaches are divided by C.D. Glickman [6] into three primary groups: *direct, collaborative, and indirect*, where each approach allows for adjustment of an inspector for a more efficient work. In the direct approach, the emphasis is on the structure and frequent actions of reciprocal relations with teachers; in the collaborative approach, the

responsibilities, decision making, and professional colleagues' relations are mutual; in the indirect approach, the emphasis is on assistance and support needed for teachers.

T.J. Sergiovanni [12, p. 104] analyzes five ways of differential inspection: the clinical inspection that means a practical work in a school, inspection with colleagues, inspection directed by an educational employee, non-official inspection, and inspection based on investigation. The clinical supervision is basically defined as *application in practice*. It is the only thing that is supposed to improve teachers' activity efficacy in a class. The researcher emphasizes that the clinical supervision is considered as the most strategic and effective method promoting improvement of teaching by creating motivation and commitment in teachers out of the purpose to assist teachers to replace existing teaching patterns by more efficient. The *clinical supervision is conducted repetitively and consists of five stages*: making acquaintance for preliminary discussion (before observing), observing teaching, analysis and strategy, feedback for a summarizing report (after observation), and feedback analysis.

A. Glatthorn [5, p. 178] states that a combination of inspection types is required, while each inspection style allows choosing from several means:

1. Colleague inspection (collaborative) - mutual thinking and working with teachers, creation of development and collaborative professional development;
2. Inspection directed by the teacher - teachers work alone and assume the responsibility for their professional development, formulate an annual program, targets and purposes;
3. Inspection based on investigation – the decisions based on the application and practice
4. Non-official inspection - bases upon random encounters between inspectors and teacher, at work.

The analysis of these data and the relations between a teacher and an inspector create the foundation for the formulation of an action plan, procedures and a search for a strategy that might improve pupils' achievements in mathematics, through tools that allow for the improvement of a teacher's behavior in a mathematics class.

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